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OCT #12

EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES

THE AVENGERS

HEROES REUNITED

PART 2 OF 4

SIMONSON • RYAN & WINN
CRAWFORD • REGLA

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EPILOGUE...
...TWILIGHT...
...SOMEWHERE ON THE ATLANTIC OCEAN UNDER A FLOWING BREEZE...
...THE LAPPING WHITECAPS DO OBEISANCE TO AN ANCIENT LITANY.
MAY THE SHIP THAT TRAVELS BETWEEN THE WORLDS CARRY THEE TO THY REST.
THINE HAMMER BLESS AND PROTECT THEE ON THIS JOURNEY.
IN THE NAMES OF ALL-FATHER ODIN, OF MOTHER FRIGGA...
...FAREWELL, MY BROTHER. FARE THEE WELL, THOR.
AS THE TREE IS GREEN FOREVER, MAY THY SOUL LIVE IN ETERNITY IN THE HALLS OF HIGH VAHALLA.

EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES Stan Lee Presents

SHADOW'S END!

HEROES REUNITED PART 2 OF 4

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SO BE IT!

HE'S AWAY. YOU MAY FIRE WHEN READY, FURY.

DO YOU *KNOW* WHAT FIRING OUR MAIN BATTERY *ONCE* IS GOING TO COST THE AMERICAN *TAXPAYERS*, NICK?

DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT WOULD HAVE COST THE AMERICAN TAXPAYERS IF HE HADN'T SACRIFICED HIS LIFE*?

* A HEROIC TALE TOLD LAST ISSUE -- Rachelle

YOU MAY FIRE WHEN READY, SERGEANT.

A MOMENT LATER, THE CLOUDS ERUPT...

...AND IN THAT INSTANT, THERE IS A BLAZE OF GLORY NOT SEEN UPON THE FACE OF THE WATERS IN A THOUSAND YEARS...

...AS THE SUN SETS UPON THE BURNING OCEAN.

SHORTLY...

'TWAS WELL DONE.

A PROPER FUNERAL FOR A TRUE VIKING. THANK YOU, COLONEL FURY.

YOU CAN THANK THE PRESIDENT. HE OKAYED IT.

I'M JUST ALONG FOR THE RIDE.

WHAT ABOUT *HELLCAT*? AND THE *VISION*? THEY WERE LOKI'S VICTIMS *TOO*. THEY *MUSTN'T* BE FORGOTTEN, HANK.

THEY *WON'T BE*, JAN. TRUST ME.

WHATEVER PRICE WE'VE PAID, *WHATEVER* HAPPENS NEXT, THIS WILL *ALWAYS* BE REMEMBERED AS ONE OF THE AVENGERS' *FINEST* HOURS.

MAYDAY! MAYDAY! COLONEL FURY! DO YOU COPY?

I THINK *"NEXT"* JUST GOT HERE, CAP!

THIS IS *FURY*, QUARTERMAIN. WHAT'S YER STATUS?

I'M GOING DOWN, NICK!

COMPLETE *SYSTEMS FAILURE*! I MANAGED THE FINAL JUMP WITH CHEWING GUM AND *BALING WIRE*!

GALACTUS IS COMING! HIS HERALDS ARE *KILLERS*! THEY FRIED MY WARP DRIVE!

GOOD LUCK, NICK, DUM DUM! SEE YOU IN —

SQUARK!

COLONEL! HE'S COMING THROUGH THE ATMOSPHERE AT ABOUT MACH 15, RIGHT FOR THE HELICARRIER!

ALL HANDS! RIG FOR COLLISION!

AT MACH 15, THE JUMP SHIP IS TRAVELING APPROXIMATELY 167 MILES PER MINUTE.

PATHOOM

THE DOOMED CRAFT REACHES THE EARTH IN JUST OVER A SECOND.

CLAY'S GONE!

DAMAGE REPORT!

SHIP BLEW CLEAN *THROUGH* US! BUT STABILIZERS ARE AT 87%!

WE CAN *HOLD!*

SO WHAT THE BLAZES IS A "GALACTUS"?

HE *IS* A GOD.

AND HE HAS COME TO *DESTROY* US IN HIS *WRATH!*

WHO --?

IT'S THE ORIGINAL *Mr. BAD EXAMPLE!*

SCARLET WITCH? AVENGERS? ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE THE *MONARCH* OF *LATVERIA* --

-- AND EVERYBODY'S *FAVORITE* EVIL MASTERMIND...

...*Dr. VICTOR VON DOOM!*

BELIEVE ME, HE LIVES *UP* TO HIS BILLING.

HOW'D HE GET ABOARD THE HELICARRIER?

MAYBE WE'D BETTER FRY HIM RIGHT *NOW!*

YOU'LL DO NOTHING OF THE SORT. CAN'T YOU SEE HE'S PRACTICALLY HYSTERICAL?

I DO NOT NEED YOUR MEWLING ASSESSMENT, CAPTAIN AMERICA. *I HAVE SEEN SIGHTS NO MAN* HAS EVER WITNESSED *BEFORE!*

THE *WORLD* HAS BEEN *DESTROYED!*

AND *I* ONLY AM ESCAPED ALONE TO TELL THEE!

YER NOT IMPRESSIN' *ME*, DOOM. I READ *MOBY DICK* TOO.

BESIDES, I AIN'T NOTICED THE WORLD MISSIN' RECENTLY.

FOOLS! GALACTUS HAS *ALREADY* COME *ONCE* WITH HIS HERALDS. HE TORE THE VERY *CORE* OF THE EARTH LOOSE FROM ITS FOUNDATIONS...

...AND *DEVOURED* THE SUM OF THE WORLD'S *ENERGIES!*

MY *CHRONO-SQUARE* HAS ENABLED ME TO RETURN IN TIME ONLY MOMENTS BEFORE HIS ARRIVAL TO *WARN* YOU.

* SEE FF
Rachelle

HE HAS COME *ALREADY!* HE WILL COME *AGAIN!*

YOU MUST REARM THE *ICBM'S**, KILL HIS *HERALDS* WHEN THEY ARRIVE...

...AND DESTROY THE *CAPACITORS* BEFORE THEY CAN BE *IMPLANTED* TO BOIL THE SEAS AND REDUCE THE PLANET TO *RUBBLE!*

IT'S EARTH'S *ONLY* HOPE.

FOOLS, I SAY AGAIN! YOU CANNOT *TOUCH* ME...

...BUT YOU WILL *REGRET* YOUR *INSOLENCE*. REMEMBER MY WARNING AS YOU *DIE!*

THKAKL

* INTER-CONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MISSILES -- Rachelle

Uhh... TIME TRAVEL. RIGHT. YOU WANT US TO INCAPACITATE THIS LOON, COLONEL?

Hmmm. IF DOOM CAN DO *THAT*, MAYBE HE WASN'T *LYING* ABOUT THE TIME MACHINE *OR* GALACTUS.

HE MIGHT *NOT* HAVE BEEN, CAP. LEMME FILL YOU IN ON QUARTERMAIN'S MISSION... AND HIS EXPERIMENTAL JUMPSHIP.

MEANWHILE, IN THE LATVERIAN EMBASSY IN NEW YORK...

THE FIRST MOVE HAS BEEN MADE TO WIN THE COMING BATTLE AGAINST GALACTUS.

ONLY AN OVERWHELMING *SURPRISE ATTACK* WILL ACCOMPLISH THAT.

HIS *MEN* MAY NOT HAVE BELIEVED ME, BUT FURY WILL CONSIDER MY WARNING AND REMEMBER THE DESTRUCTION OF HIS JUMPSHIP.

S.H.I.E.L.D. AND THE AVENGERS WILL ENGAGE THE HERALDS BECAUSE THEY *MUST*.

WITH MY HELP, THEY WILL *SUCCEED!*

THE COST WILL BE *GREAT*.

BUT WITH *GALACTUS* AND MOST OF EARTH'S HEROES *DEAD*...

CLICK

BEEP

ACCESS CODE ACKNOWLEDGED.

... EARTH WILL BE *MINE* FOR THE *TAKING!*

CONTROL CODES ACKNOWLEDGED.

GOOD. SOVIET CRYPTOGRAPHY WAS ALWAYS *CHILD'S PLAY*.

NOW A QUICK SCAN THROUGH THE COMMERCIAL BAND-WIDTHS...

...FOUR OF THE OBJECTS MOVING AT HIGH SPEED OVER THE EARTH, HEADED FOR UNKNOWN DESTINATIONS.

EACH SEEMS ACCOMPANIED BY AN UNIDENTIFIED FLYING INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS FAILED TO RESPOND TO ANY HAIL OR CHALLENGE.

GALACTUS'S HERALDS HAVE ARRIVED.

LET THE GAMES BEGIN.

AND ABOARD THE HELICARRIER...

AFTER THE ASTRONOMICAL ANOMALY WAS DISCOVERED, CLAY VOLUNTEERED TO TAKE OUR EXPERIMENTAL JUMPSHIP BEYOND PLUTO FOR A RECON.

YOU *SAW* HIS HOME-COMING.

YOU THINK QUARTERMAIN FOUND *GALACTUS*, COLONEL?

ON THE BASIS OF WHAT'S HAPPENING RIGHT NOW? YEP. THE FOUR BILLIARD BALLS 'N' THEIR SHEPHERDS ARE HEADIN' FOR THE ANTARCTIC, MOSCOW, HONG KONG, AND LOS ANGELES.

SO MAYBE DOOM WUZ *RIGHT*. WE CAN'T TAKE *ANY* CHANCES.

IF YER *GAME*, THE AVENGERS COULD —

WE'RE READY *NOW*, COLONEL. *WHERE?*

HONG KONG.

THE HELICARRIER'S COURSE HAS ALREADY BEEN ALTERED FOR *L.A.*

"I'VE GOT SOME *VOLUNTEERS* HEADING FOR MOSCOW...

"...AND THE SOUTH POLE."

THIS BIRD'LL PUT YOU THERE IN AN HOUR.

WHEN YOU GET THERE, YOU CAN --

THE SCARLET WITCH AND I WON'T BE GOING, COLONEL.

HANK! I THOUGHT --

HONEY, I BELIEVE DOOM! AND I BELIEVE THAT IF EARTH IS GOING TO SURVIVE, WE'LL ALL HAVE TO DO OUR PART.

AS ANT-MAN, THERE ISN'T A WHOLE LOT I CAN DO.

BUT HANK PYM, SCIENTIST, IS ANOTHER STORY.

AND THE SCARLET WITCH CAN HELP ME.

JUST... BE CAREFUL, DARLING. I'LL JOIN YOU AS SOON AS I CAN.

OH, HANK... I DO LOVE YOU SO.

THANK'S TO S.H.I.E.L.D., YOU'RE NOW ARMED WITH AN INCREDIBLY LETHAL STINGER. YOU'LL BE ABLE TO HELP.

BESIDES, WITH THOR AND IRON MAN AND CAP, YOU'LL BE AS SAFE AS ANYONE COULD BE UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

WHAT GIVES, PYM? SOME VISION OF THE FUTURE?

SINCE YOU'VE ALREADY GUESSED, COLONEL...

...YOU CAN HELP BY GIVING WANDA AND ME A LIFT BACK TO MY LAB...

...A.S.A.P.

SO WHAT WAS THAT GUFF ABOUT YOU BEING THE ENCHANTRESS'S DAUGHTER?

GUFF IS RIGHT

THAT WAS SIMPLY PART OF HER CAMPAIGN TO GET ME TO SIDE WITH LOKI."

SHE'S NO *MOTHER*. AT LEAST NOT *THAT* KIND.

I SEE SHE'S DISAPPEARED IN OUR PRESENT CRISIS.

SHE HAS THE ATTENTION SPAN OF A HUMM NG-BIRD

BRACE YOURSELF, WANDA. THIS MAY BE SOMETHING OF A SHOCK

• FROM [illegible] • Rachelle

*GASP! IT'S... THE *VISION!*

NOT QUITE. THIS IS ONLY A *DUPLICATE* BODY.

THE *SPIRIT* IS MISSING.

BUT I CAN *REMEDY* THAT.

WHEN I SHUT DOWN THE VISION TO STOP LOKI, I REMOVED A SPECIFIC CHIP.•

• IN [illegible] -- Rachelle

ESSENTIALLY, *THIS* IS THE VISION. ALL HIS EXPERIENCES... HIS THOUGHTS... HIS *LIFE*.

NOW HE WILL LIVE... AND *FIGHT*... AGAIN

SPAKK

HELLO, HANKPYM. HELLO WANDASCARLETWITCH.

ODD, I DO NOT REMEMBER FALLING ASLEEP.

YOU DIDN'T, PAL. BUT I'LL FILL YOU IN LATER. MAYBE.

RIGHT NOW, YOU AND WANDA HAVE A *RENDEZVOUS* TO KEEP

THE HEART OF MOSCOW...

WE'RE TOO LATE. WHATEVER ITS FUNCTION, THE MACHINE IS ALREADY EMBEDDED IN THE EARTH.

REED! I'M GETTING OVERLOAD READINGS EVERYWHERE!

WE'RE UNDER ATTACK! SOME SORT OF ENERGY BEAM! WE'LL HAVE TO EJECT!

I SEE HIM. IT'S THE SILVER SURFER!

WHATTA REVOLTIN' DEVELOPMENT! WE AIN'T EVEN SEEN THE BAD GUY YET!

AND AS THREE OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR DESCEND TO EARTH IN THEIR OWN UNIQUE WAY...

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'D DO THIS AFTER WE SAVED YOUR LIFE!

I AM THE ELDEST HERALD OF GALACTUS! I DO WHAT I MUST!

WHAT BITTER IRONY THAT I MUST FACE THE FANTASTIC FOUR IN THEIR FINAL HOUR.

IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU *WANT* IT, FINE BY *ME!*

SO LET'S CUT RIGHT TO THE CHASE...

...WHERE THE BAD GUY'S *ALIEN* BITES THE *DUST! PERMANENTLY!*

THOOM

JOHNNY!

A VALIANT EFFORT...

...BUT *FUTILE* AGAINST ONE WHO CAN SOAR THROUGH THE HEART OF A STAR.

AS PUTILE AS YOUR EFFORTS TO SAVE YOUR *WORLD!*

HITLER WOULD'A *LOVED* A GUY LIKE YOU!

THE TWO A' YA COULDA CRAWLED OUT FROM UNDER THE SAME *ROCK!*

GALACTUS MUST BE *FED!*

SEZ WHO?

THE PREDATOR DEVOURS THE PREY WITHOUT REMORSE, WITHOUT PITY.

IT IS THE ORDER OF NATURE

SO I'M SUPPOSED TA HOP ON THE GRILL WITH A SMILE?

EAT MY *SHORTS,* PAL!

SKREEAKK

MAN. THIS GUY COULD GO A COUPLE A' ROUNDS WITH THE *HULK...*

...IF HE DIDN'T *BORE* 'EM TA DEATH *FIRST!*

FIRE UP ONE A'YER *GIZMOS,* STRETCH! *QUICK!*

BUFFOON! EVEN IN THE LAST EXTREMITY, YOU'D JEST AS THOUGH THE SHOW WENT ON FOREVER!

ALONE OF ALL HUMAN BE.NGS, I KNOW THAT IT WILL NOT...

...UNLESS WE CHANGE THE HERE AND NOW

A PITY THIS SHALL BE SO IMPERSONAL.

CIRCUMSTANCES FORCE ME TO FOREGO THE IMMEDIATE GRATIFICATION OF DESTROYING THE FANTASTIC FOUR WITH MY OWN HANDS.

BUT GREAT MONARCHS LEARN TO DELEGATE.

LAUNCH SEQUENCE ALPHA THREE TANGO ONE. DESTINATION MOSCOW.

AND SOMEWHERE EAST OF THE URAL MOUNTAINS, THE EARTH YAWNS...

...AND SPITS DEATH INTO THE SKY!

WHILE IN MOSCOW...

YOUR FIGHTING *HEART* DOES YOU CREDIT, TH'NG!

UGGH! THAT AN' A DIME WOULDN'T BUY ME A CUP A' *COFFEE* AT STARBUCKS THESE DAYS, *CREEP!*

STRETCH! I COULD USE A LITTLE *HELP* HERE!

BACK OFF, BEN! I'M *READY* FOR ANOTHER ROUND!

MY *ENERGY ABSORBITRON* SURVIVED THE CRASH BUT I'VE GOT TO RECALIBRATE THE *ENTROPY CHAMBER*, SUE!

IT'S ONLY A *BETA* MODEL!

AND THE SURFER'S ZEROING IN ON BEN AND JOHNNY!

DON'T WORRY, DARLING. I'LL SHIELD THEM!

THE INVISIBLE WOMAN'S *FORCE FIELD!* IMPRESSIVE.

BUT ALREADY IT'S WEAKENING UNDER MY COSMIC *ONSLAUGHT!*

C'MON, SUZIE! DROP IT SO I CAN *CLOCK* 'IM AGAIN!

SCKHASH

I JUST REALIZED I'M FIGHTING THE *WRONG* FOE!

YOU ARE THE ORGAN.ZING FACTOR OF THIS TEAM.

IT IS *YOU* I MUST DEFEAT!

YOU UNDERESTIMATE THE RESOURCEFULNESS OF EACH MEMBER OF THE *FANTASTIC FOUR*, SURFER...

... BUT I'VE TAKEN YOUR *MEASURE* NOW!

KRRAACKT

JOHNNY! STAND WHERE YOU ARE!

HuhP HEY, WAITAMINNIT, REED!

WHAT ARE YOU *DOING?* NO!

SHRAAM

BEN! THE SURFER! NAIL HIM!

WITH PLEASURE!

BUT WHAT DID YA DO TA JOHNNY?

TWRAK

POWER, BEN! REED'S GIVEN ME POWER LIKE I NEVER FELT BEFORE!

I CAN TAKE OUT THE CAPACITOR! I KNOW I CAN! WATCH THIS!

FWOOSH

BWHAWHARDDM

THE SKY ABOVE RUSSIA TURNS BLOOD RED AS THE CAPACITOR EXPLODES.

STAY PUT, YA BLASTED JUMPIN' BEAN!

I AIN'T FIN;SHED KNOCKIN' YA INTO NEXT WEEK!

YOUR LEADER'S PLOY WAS ONLY TEMPORARILY EFFECTIVE!

ALREADY, THE POWER COSMIC RETURNS TO MY BODY!

AND THIS TIME, I'LL NOT -- WHAT?!

INCREDIBLE! SURELY NOT EVEN HUMANS WOULD DO SUCH A THING!

... I WILL CARRY MY LOVE FOR YOU IN MY SOUL FOREVER.

REED?

I.C.B.M.'S TRAVEL FAR ABOVE THE SPEED OF SOUND.

THERE IS NO WARNING.

Oh, REED! I CAN'T DO IT! I'M EXHAUSTED FROM HOLDING BACK THE SURFER'S BLASTS!

WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S THE MATTER?

MY HEART, I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT WHETHER THIS WORLD S SAVED OR NOT...

I DON'T BELIEVE IT! MY SENSORS SHOW --

SUE! WE NEED A FORCE FIELD AROUND THE FOUR OF US! AS STRONG AS YOU CAN MAKE T! NOW!

THERE IS MERELY THE TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF MOSCOW...

...AND THE THOUSAND SQUARE MILES THAT SURROUND IT.

A SINGLE ENTITY ALONE SURVIVES.

...BUT TO DECLARE HIS UNDYING LOVE.

IN THE FACE OF CERTAIN DEATH, HOW WONDROUSLY STRANGE.

RICHARDS OBVIOUSLY KNEW THE END WAS AT HAND...

...YET HIS ONLY THOUGHT WAS NOT TO CURSE HIS FATE...

AND FAR AWAY IN THE LATVERIAN EMBASSY...

UNFORTUNATE. THE CAPACITOR'S BEEN DESTROYED, BUT NOT THE [redacted].

I'LL HAVE TO INCREASE THE *MEGATONNAGE* NEXT TIME.

MEANWHILE, IN THE ANTARCTIC...

BIG MACHINE AHEAD SOMEWHERE.

HULK WILL *FIND* IT. HULK WILL *SMASH* IT.

HELLO, BRUCE BANNER-HULK. DR. HENRY PYM THOUGHT YOU MIGHT NEED ASSISTANCE.

THE VISION AND THE SCARLET WITCH HAVE COME TO OFFER IT.

BANNER NEEDS HELP. HULK *NOT* NEED HELP.

AND HULK NOT *BRUCEBANNER-HULK!* *HULK IS HULK!*

I WILL ADJUST MY SPEECH PATTERNS ACCORDINGLY.

THEN VISION AND WITCH CAN *COME*. THEY CAN *WATCH*.

AND IN THE HILLS BEYOND LOS ANGELES...

WE MADE IT, COLONEL!

THERE'S THE CAPACITOR!

BRING US AROUND MAIN BATTERIES TO REAR!

WHERE IN BLAZES IS THAT THING'S NURSEMAID?

SHE'S JUST ABOVE US, SIR!

YA DON'T SAY.

A COUPLE MORE SHOTS LIKE THAT AND WE'RE HISTORY!

SQUADRON ONE, BREAK LEFT. TWO, BREAK RIGHT!

THE REST A' YA FOLLOW ME!

WE GOTTA KEEP HER OFF BALANCE!

THE DOGFIGHT RAGES FURIOUSLY FOR A GOOD FIVE MINUTES AS THE HELICARRIER EDGES EVER CLOSER TO THE CAPACITOR, WHEN SUDDENLY...

SLAM!

UGH!

COLONEL FURY!

TAKE OVER, SERGEANT!

DUM DUM! STATUS REPORT!

WE'RE *LOSING*, NICK. THE OLD TUB'S TOO BADLY DAMAGED AND WE CAN'T SAVE HER. IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF MINUTES —

— YER WOUNDED?!

IT'S TIME TA THROW A "HAIL MARY" PASS, DUM DUM.

MARSHAL THE TROOPS AND TOSS EVERYTHING YA GOT AT HER I NEED THIRTY SECONDS.

NICK —?

SEE YA AROUND, YA OL' WALRUS WATCH MY BOYS NOW BEAT IT.

SURE, NICK. I'LL SEE YOU AROUND.

YOU *HEARD* THE MAN! LOCK AND LOAD! *ABANDON SHIP! NOW!*

NICK, WE'VE GOT TO GET YOU MEDICAL ATTENTION.

IT'S NOT IMPORTANT *I* STAY ALIVE.

IT'S IMPORTANT *EARTH* STAY ALIVE!

GET OUTTA HERE, COUNTESS. WE'RE GOIN' DOWN IN FLAMES AN' I'M DRIVIN'

I'LL LEAVE WHEN I'M READY, NICK. I'M NOT READY YET.

SUIT YERSELF.

KICK IN THE AFTERBURNERS, WILLYA?

IF DUM DUM SUCEEDS, WE AIN'T GONNA HAVE MUCH TIME TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT.

SENSORS SHOW THEY'RE ON HER, NICK. SHE'S RIPPING THROUGH THEM, BUT SHE'S OCCUPIED.

THEN LET'S DO IT!

AND WITH A GRACE BELYING HER UNGAINLY APPEARANCE, THE HELICARRIER ARCS SIDEWAYS...

...AND BEGINS TO DIVE STRAIGHT FOR THE CAPACITOR!

THE ENEMY GUARDIAN RACES AFTER THE DESCENDING JUGGERNAUT...

...BUT TOO LATE! AND THE ENVELOPING EXPLOSION LEAPS TO GREET HER!

THE HUMANS HAVE DESTROYED ANOTHER CAPACITOR... AND TAKEN PLASMA WITH THEM.

WITHOUT REALIZING IT, THEY'RE SEALING THEIR FATE.

YET COLONEL FURY WENT TO HIS DEATH WORRIED ABOUT SAVING THE LIVES OF HIS SUBORDINATES.

THERE IS SOMETHING ALMOST SUBLIME ABOUT THE COURAGE WITH WHICH THE HUMANS ATTEMPT TO TRANSCEND THEIR DESTINY.

THE SLOPES OF MT. EREBUS IN THE ANTARCTIC...

SATELLITE COORDINATES CONFIRMED, SCARLETWITCH. THERE IS THE CAPACITOR!

HULK WILL DESTROY IT NOW!

KATHAHAM

STAY *BACK*, YOU GROTESQUE *MOCKERY* OF A *HUMAN BEING*! YOU'LL DESTROY *NOTHING*!

HULK, ARE YOU --?

FLAME HERD *BURN* HULK. HULK *ANGRY*!

THAT BEAM WOULD HAVE *INCINERATED* ANY ORDINARY BEING.

THE DESTRUCTION OF A WORLD THAT SPAWNED SUCH FREAKS WILL BE A *BLESSING* FOR THE COSMIC BALANCE.

FLAME HEAD TALK TOO MUCH!

FIRELORD, THE HERALD OF GALACTUS, DOES *MORE* THAN TALK.

AAARRGHH

HE WIELDS THE POWER OF *LIFE* AND *DEATH!*

SCHOOOM

HULK!

HULK FEEL... WERK... HURT... BANNER... COMES...!

WEAK? YOU SHOULD BE *DEAD!*

FIRELORD'S POWER IS INCREDIBLE, BUT A SPELL OF *CONFUSION* SHOULD *FREEZE* H M FOR A MOMENT!

SCARLETWITCH HAS GIVEN ME MY OPPORTUNITY!

WITH A QUICK SHIFT IN MOLECULAR DENSITY...

..I CAN TAKE FIRELORD BY SURPRISE AND DEPRIVE HIM OF HIS WEAPON!

GRAAAK

WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF HIS STAFF, FIRELORD IS UNABLE TO STAY ALOFT!

FOOLS! EVEN IF YOU DEFEAT *ME*, YOU'LL BE FINISHING *YOURSELVES!*

FLAME HEAD NOT TALK *ANY MORE!...*

THWAKAM

...ANY MORE...

THE INJURED HULK NO LONGER HAS THE POWER TO DESTROY THE CAPACITOR .

. .BUT THANKS TO FIRELORD...

. AND A RAPID INSTRUMENT SCAN OF HIS STAFF...

I DO!

SPREKHRANG

VISION, I THINK BRUCE IS DYING.

WE MUST GET HIM TO A DOCTOR QUICKLY.

NO!

...CAN'T BEAT *HIM*... *THIS* WAY..

.. MUST TELL... REST OF THE AVENGERS... TELL...

AND FAR ABOVE THE BURNING WASTELANDS...

BANNER *UNDERSTANDS* THE PLAN! HE WOULD *DIE* TO GIVE THE OTHERS *LIFE!* AND *HOPE!*

EARTH WILL INDEED BE A RARE FEAST FOR GALACTUS

HONG KONG, WHERE THE BODIES OF SLAUGHTERED CHINESE TROOPS ATTEST TO THEIR FAILURE TO DISLODGE THE GREAT ALIEN ENGINE...

...OR ITS GUARDIAN.

I AM *TERRAX*, HERALD OF GALACTUS

I CLAIM THIS TERRITORY IN HIS NAME DEPART... OR *DIE!*

IT MATTERS *NOT* TO ME.

HOW ABOUT IF -- *HAWKEYE!*

NO!

AND I'VE STILL GOT *LOKI'S ARROWS!*

LET'S SEE HOW LAUGHING BOY HANDLES A LOW YIELD THERMOGRADE NUKE!

DON'T TRY TO *STOP* ME, CAP! I'M *JUICED!*

ARGH!

SPLAT!

SKRAAAK!

YOU.. *HURT* ME! I DO NOT *REMEMBER* THE LAST TIME THAT HAPPENED...

..BUT MY AX IS A DEFENSIVE AS WELL AS AN OFFENSIVE WEAPON!

I THINK YOU WILL NOT HANDLE YOUR WEAPON'S ENERGY QUITE SO *EASILY!*

CLINT!

HE'S *GONE!*

YOU'RE GOING TO PAY FOR THAT, MISTER...

...AND PAY *HEAVILY!*

CLINT'S DEATH FROZE *EVERYBODY!*

YOU MAY BE GALACTUS'S BOY...

...BUT YOU'RE STILL JUST ONE MORE BAD GUY TO ME...

GOT TO TAKE THE OFFENSIVE...

...AND I'VE BEEN HANDLING BAD GUYS FOR MORE WARS THAN I WANT TO *REMEMBER!*

...AND GIVE THOR, IRON MAN AND THE WASP A CHANCE TO *RECOVER!*

I AM NOT A *"BAD GUY"*, HUMAN.

BLAKHAMM

UUGHH!

I AM THE *NEMESIS* OF YOUR ENTIRE *WORLD!*

BLAST, HAWKEYE!

PTHHOOOM

IF ONLY HE HADN'T JUMPED IN FIRST, WE MIGHT HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO GET OUT OF THIS WITHOUT FATALITIES! A DOUBLE DOSE OF TURBO REPULSORS SHOULD PUT TERRAX DOWN!

TERRAX SEEMS MORE DANGEROUS THAN ANYONE WE'VE EVER MET!

EVEN THE WASP'S STING DOESN'T AFFECT HIM!

I HAVE SHATTERED *WORLDS*, HUMAN! YOUR SIMPLE, MORTAL WEAPONS ARE *NOTHING* TO *ME!*

AND YOUR COMPAN ON PREPARES TO DELIVER A BLOW WITH A SIMPLE *HAMMER?*

YOU *WASTE* MY TIME!

FIRST I WILL CRACK YOUR ARMOR LIKE AN *EGG-SHELL...*

RAAANG

...AND THEN A BLAST OF *COSMIC ENERGY* TO DESTROY YOUR ALLY!

THOR! LOOK OUT!

SHRIEK

JAN! NOOO!

THE *WASP* CAUGHT THE BRUNT OF TERRAX'S BLAST!

SHRAAK

I SWEAR HER SACRIFICE SHALL *NOT BE* IN VAIN!

MJOLNIR MAY SEEM ONLY A HAMMER, TERRAX...

...BUT 'TIS A WEAPON FORGED FOR THE GODS!

IT ENCOMPASSES THE POWER AND FURY OF THE VERY THUNDER...

...AND BY THE BEARD OF ODIN, T'WILL BE YOUR NEMESIS!

THRAKHOOM

THE SHELL OF THE CAPACITOR SHATTERS...

...AND A MOMENT LATER...

HAKHAKHOOM

YOU DID IT, THOR.

THE AVENGERS DID IT, CAPTAIN...

...AND THOUGH THE EXPLOSION... HAS SORELY WOUNDED ME...

...I WILL SURVIVE.

WE HAVE TO GET BACK TO NEW YORK.

I MUST TELL HANK ABOUT JAN.

AGAIN, IN THE MIDST OF DEATH, THERE IS CONCERN. COMPASSION.

COULD IT BE THAT GALACTUS' HUNGER IS WRONG? THAT THERE IS SOMETHING WORTH SAVING ON THIS IMPERFECT WORLD?

AND DEEP BENEATH THE LATVERIAN EMBASSY IN NEW YORK CITY...

— A GIGANTIC SPHERE IS HOVERING AT THIS MOMENT ABOVE THE ISLAND OF MANHATTAN. NO ONE KNOWS —

THE MOMENT I HAVE BEEN ANTICIPATING IS HERE!

THE FANTASTIC FOUR ARE *GONE*, THE AVENGERS BADLY *DEPLETED*, S.H.I.E.L.D. IS UNLIKELY TO RECOVER...

...AND GALACTUS'S GREAT CRAFT HAS TAKEN ITS PLACE UPON THE STAGE!

IT'S A SHAME TO LOSE NEW YORK, I'VE ALWAYS ENJOYED THE CITY.

PTHIK

I'LL HAVE TO SEE THAT SOME SORT OF MONUMENT IS PLACED HERE WHEN THE WORLD IS REBUILDING UNDER *MY* LEADERSHIP.

PERHAPS A STATUE OF DOOM'S UNBOUNDED SORROW AT THE SACRIFICES THE PEASANTS HAVE HAD TO MAKE ON BEHALF OF MY VICTORY.

AND NOW I MUST MAKE THOSE SACRIFICES A *REALITY*.

HALF A WORLD AWAY, CIRCUITS CLOSE..

...ROCKET FUEL COMBUSTS..

..AND TWO-THIRDS OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION IGNITE IN A THERMONUCLEAR DETONATION.

NOOOOO!

DREAMS DIE HARD.

THAT'S *FAR ENOUGH*, GALACTUS.

WE HAVE [redacted] YOUR CAPACITORS. YOU CANNOT HAVE THE EARTH.

THE GIANT FIGURE PAUSES FOR A MOMENT...

...AND THEN RAISES A HAND TOWARDS THE GREAT SPHERE ABOVE THE CITY.

I AM THE *AIR-WALKER*. I *SPEAK* FOR THE MASTER.

BY DESTROYING THE CAPACITORS, YOU HAVE SIGNIFIED THAT YOUR PLANET IS *READY* FOR *HARVESTING*.

YOUR ARSENALS HAVE BEEN *NEUTRALIZED.*

AND AS ON A THOUSAND THOUSAND OTHER WORLDS, YOU WILL BECOME *ONE* WITH *GALACTUS!*

BHAAKKAAKK

NOW *BACK!* NONE MAY STAND SO CLOSE TO THE MASTER

"THE *ELEMENTAL CONVERTER* ASSEMBLES ITSELF TO RECEIVE THE FRUITS OF THE EARTH...

"...AS FAR ACROSS THE GLOBE, THE GREAT CAPACITORS *REFORM,* REAL GN, AND REACTIVATE THEMSELVES

"THE ENTIRE HISTORY OF HUMANKIND HAS BEEN BUT A PROLOGUE TO THE ARRIVAL OF THIS FINAL MOMENT!"

AND ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH, THE SEAS BEGIN TO BOIL

TONY STARK'S MANSION, THE AVENGERS' TEMPORARY HQ...

VISION! WANDA! GIVE ME A HAND.

THOR AND IRON MAN ARE BADLY -- DOCTOR DOOM! WHAT'S HE DOING HERE?

HE CAME TO OFFER HIS AID.

TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE.

WE'VE RUN OUT OF OPTIONS.

HANK, I'VE GOT TO TELL YOU --

I ALREADY KNOW, CAP. THERE'S NOTHING YOU COULD HAVE DONE TO SAVE JAN.

I'VE ALREADY SHED MY TEARS. I'LL CRY AGAIN LATER IF THERE'S A WORLD TO CRY IN.

I CAN'T BELIEVE WE'VE LOST. WE FOUGHT SO HARD.

AIR-WALKER SAID OUR WORLD IS ONLY ONE OF A MILLION GALACTUS HAS DESTROYED.

HOW MANY *MORE* MILLIONS WILL HE RAVAGE? IF ONLY WE COULD HAVE *STOPPED* HIM.

BRUCE KNEW, CAP. LISTEN UP. HE DOESN'T HAVE MUCH TIME.

COUGH GAMMA REACTOR... AVENGERS ISLAND...

...DESTROY IT... OPEN THE FLAW IN SPACE-TIME FABRIC WITHIN...*

WARP ENGULFS.. SOLAR SYSTEM'S GRAVITY WELL... GALACTUS... EVERYTHING...

BRUCE IS *GONE*, BUT HE'S GIVEN US THE *ANSWER!*

OUR LIVES, OUR WORLD ARE *ALREADY* FORFEIT...

...BUT WE MAY YET BE ABLE TO SAVE COUNTLESS *MILLIONS* FROM SHARING OUR *FATE!*

...FOLLOW CALCULATIONS SCOLIGHT

* WE COVERED THE PHYSICS OF THIS THE LAST COUPLE OF ISSUES -- Rachelle

THIS IS *MADNESS!*

FOOL THAT I WAS TO COME HERE! THE *CHRONO-SQUARE* IS MY ONLY *HOPE!*

AVENGERS ISLAND... IN THE CONTAINMENT BUILDING OF THE RUINED MANSION THAT WAS ONCE HOME TO EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES...

THOR

THE JOURNEY HERE HAS REOPENED HIS WOUNDS. HE'S GETTING WEAKER.

WITHOUT THE POWER OF THOR'S HAMMER, WE CAN'T *SUCCEED.*

PERHAPS *I* CAN HELP.

THE *SILVER SURFER!* BUT YOU'RE ONE OF *GALACTUS'S* HERALDS!

AND I WOULD DO WHAT NO HERALD HAS EVER DONE... *BETRAY* GALACTUS.

I HAVE LED THE MASTER TO *MANY* WORLDS THAT NO LONGER EXIST.

AS WITH ANY GREAT PREDATOR, THERE IS NO EVIL IN HIM, BUT I HAVE COME TO SYMPATHIZE WITH THE PREY.

...PERHAPS BECAUSE I WAS *SAVED* BY THEM.*

I HAVE WATCHED YOU AND YOUR FELLOWS AS YOU FOUGHT TO SAVE YOUR WORLD...

...AND NOW, WORLDS YET UNBORN.

IN THE TERROR OF THESE MOMENTS, I HAVE WITNESSED LOVE, COMPASSION, DEEP SORROW, AND BANNER'S *SAVAGE* HOPE FOR THE UNIVERSE'S FUTURE.

PERHAPS ITS FUTURE IS *NOT* INEVITABLE.

AND I HAVE MUCH TO BE FORGIVEN FOR.

WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME, SURFER.

CAN YOU HELP THOR?

THE COSMIC ENERGY OF THE CAPACITORS HAS INJURED HIM.

BUT THE SAME POWER CAN *HEAL* THOSE WOUNDS.

MY BODY... *RESTORED!* OUR TALE IS NOT YET *TOLD!*

I THANK THEE, SURFER, FOR THY GOOD OFFICES.

VISION, YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO?

I AM READY, CAPTAIN AMERICA. FAREWELL.

THE VISION GLIDES INTO THE REACTOR WALL...

SPRACCT

...AND INSTANTLY SOLIDIFIES TO HIS DENSEST MASS!

HE'S BREACHED THE REACTOR CORE!

MAXIMUM OUTPUT! NOW!

PTHTHOOOM

THOU HAST DONE IT, MY COMPANIONS! NOW LET *MJOLNIR* SPLIT THE THUNDERING CHAOS *ASUNDER!*

AND I WILL ADD THE FORCE OF MY *OWN COSMIC POWER!*

IN THE NEXT INSTANT, AVENGERS ISLAND CEASES TO EXIST...

...AS THE BREACH IN SPACE AND TIME EXPLODES OUT OF WHAT WAS ONCE THE GAMMA REACTOR CORE!

INDEED?

AND RIPPLING OUT ALONG THE CONTOURS OF THE GRAVITY WELL...

...THE ALL-CONSUMING MAW OF DESTRUCTION ENGULFS THE EARTH...

...THE SUN...

...THE COMPASS OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM ITSELF...

...THINNING OUT FURTHER AND FURTHER UNTIL AT LAST...

...IT DISAPPEARS WITHOUT A WHISPER...

...LEAVING BEHIND THE SILENT VACUUM OF SPACE, WHERE ONCE THE PLANETS SPUN OUT THEIR ANCIENT PATHWAYS.

"AS THE TREE IS GREEN FOREVER, MAY THEIR SOULS LIVE IN ETERNITY IN THE HALLS OF HIGH VAHALLA."

VIKING FUNERAL RITE

AND SOMEWHERE IN THE BLACKNESS OF TIME, DOCTOR VICTOR VON DOOM HURTLES BACKWARDS TOWARDS DESTINY.